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IN THE RANKS AT SHILOH

*BY LEANDER STILLWELL, LATE FIRST LIEUTENANT, 61ST
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The battle of Shiloh was fought on April 6 and 7, 1862. In 1890 I wrote an article on the battle which was published in the New York Tribune, and later it appeared in several other newspapers. It has also been reprinted in book form in connection with papers by other persons, some about the war, and others of miscellaneous nature. The article I wrote twenty-five years ago is as good, I reckon, if not better than anything on that head I can write now, so it will be set out here.

There has been a great deal said and written about the battle of Shiloh, both by Rebel and Union officers and writers. On the part of the first there has been, and probably always will be, angry dispute and criticism about the conduct of General Beauregard in calling off his troops Sunday evening while fully an hour of broad, precious daylight still remained, which, as claimed by some, might have been utilized in destroying the remainder of Grant's army before Buell could have crossed the Tennessee. On the part of Union writers the matters most discussed have been as to whether or not our forces were surprised, the condition of Grant's army at the close of the first day, what the result would have been without the aid of the gunboats, or if Buell's army had not come, and kindred subjects. It is not my purpose, in telling my story of the battle of Shiloh, to say anything that will add to this volume of discussion. My age at the time was eighteen, and my position that of a common soldier in the ranks. It would therefore be foolish in me to assume the part of a critic. The generals, who, from reasonably

*Judge Stillwell is now a resident of Erie, Kansas.

safe points of observation, are sweeping the field with their glasses, and noting and directing the movements of the lines of battle, must, in the nature of things, be the ones to furnish the facts that go to make history. The extent of a battle-field seen by the common soldier is that only which comes within the range of the raised sights of his musket. And what little he does see is as "through a glass, darkly." The dense banks of powder smoke obstruct his gaze; he catches but fitful glimpses of his adversaries as the smoke veers or rises.

Then, too, my own experience makes me think that where the common soldier does his duty, all his faculties of mind and body are employed in attending to the details of his own personal part of the work of destruction, and there is but little time left him for taking mental notes to form the basis of historical articles a quarter of a century afterward. The handling, tearing, and charging of his cartridge, ramming it home (we used muzzle loaders during the Civil War), the capping of his gun, the aiming and firing, with furious haste and desperate energy—for every shot may be his last—these things require the soldier's close personal attention and make him oblivious to matters transpiring beyond his immediate neighborhood. Moreover, his sense of hearing is well-nigh overcome by the deafening uproar going on around him. The incessant and terrible crash of musketry, the roar of the cannon, the continual zip, zip, of bullets as they hiss by him, interspersed with the agonizing screams of the wounded, or the death shrieks of comrades falling in dying convulsions right in the face of the living—these things are not conducive to that serene and judicial mental equipoise which the historian enjoys in his closet.

Let the generals and historians, therefore, write of the movements of corps, divisions, and brigades. I have naught to tell but the simple story of what one private soldier saw of one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

The regiment to which I belonged was the 61st Illinois Infantry. It left its camp of instruction (a country town

in southern Illinois) about the last of February, 1862. We were sent to Benton Barracks, near St. Louis, and remained there drilling (when the weather would permit) until March 25th. We left on that day for the front. It was a cloudy, drizzly, and most gloomy day, as we marched through the streets of St. Louis down to the levee, to embark on a transport that was to take us to our destination. The city was enveloped in that pall of coal smoke for which St. Louis is celebrated. It hung heavy and low and set us all to coughing. I think the colonel must have marched us down some by-street. It was narrow and dirty, with high buildings on either side. The line officers took the sidewalks, while the regiment, marching by the flank, tramped in silence down the middle of the street, slumping through the nasty, slimy mud. There was one thing very noticeable on this march through St. Louis, and that was the utter lack of interest taken in us by the inhabitants. From pictures I had seen in books at home, my idea was that when soldiers departed for war, beautiful ladies stood on balconies and waved snowy-white handkerchiefs at the troops, while the men stood on the sidewalks and corners and swung their hats and cheered.

There may have been regiments so favored, but ours was not one of them. Occasionally a fat, chunky-looking fellow, of a gloomy cast of countenance, with a big pipe in his mouth, would stick his head out of a door or window, look at us a few seconds, and then disappear. No handkerchiefs nor hats were waved, we heard no cheers. My thoughts at the time were that the Union people there had all gone to war, or else the colonel was marching us through a "Secesh" part of town.

We marched to the levee and from there on board the big side-wheel steamer, Empress. The next evening she unfastened her moorings, swung her head out into the river, turned down stream, and we were off for the "seat of war." We arrived at Pittsburg Landing on March 31st. Pittsburg Landing, as its name indicates, was simply a landing place for steamboats. It is on the west bank of the Tennessee

river, in a thickly wooded region about twenty miles northeast of Corinth. There was no town there then, nothing but "the log house on the hill" that the survivors of the battle of Shiloh will all remember. The banks of the Tennessee on the Pittsburg Landing side are steep and bluffy, rising about 100 feet above the level of the river. Shiloh church, that gave the battle its name, was a Methodist meeting house. It was a small hewed log building with a clapboard roof, about two miles out from the landing on the main Corinth road. On our arrival we were assigned to the division of General B. M. Prentiss, and we at once marched out and went into camp. About half a mile from the landing the road forks, the main Corinth road goes to the right, past Shiloh church, the other goes to the left. These two roads come together again some miles out. General Prentiss' division was camped on this left-hand road at right angles to it. Our regiment went into camp almost on the extreme left of Prentiss' line. There was a brigade of Sherman's division under General Stuart still further to the left, about a mile, I think, in camp near a ford of Lick Creek, where the Hamburg and Purdy road crosses the creek; and between the left of Prentiss' and General Stuart's camp there were no troops. I know that, for during the few days intervening between our arrival and the battle I roamed all through those woods on our left, between us and Stuart, hunting for wild onions and "turkey peas."

The camp of our regiment was about two miles from the landing. The tents were pitched in the woods, and there was a little field of about twenty acres in our front. The camp faced nearly west, or possibly southwest.

I shall never forget how glad I was to get off that old steamboat and be on solid ground once more, in camp out in those old woods. My company had made the trip from St. Louis to Pittsburg Landing on the hurricane deck of the steamboat, and our fare on the route had beenhardtack and raw fat meat, washed down with river water, as we had no chance to cook anything, and we had not then learned the

trick of catching the surplus hot water ejected from the boilers and making coffee with it. But once on solid ground, with plenty of wood to make fires, that bill of fare was changed. I shall never again eat meat that will taste as good as the fried "sowbelly" did then, accompanied by "flap-jacks" and plenty of good, strong coffee. We had not yet settled down to the regular drills, guard duty was light, and things generally seemed to run "kind of loose." And then the climate was delightful. We had just left the bleak, frozen north, where all was cold and cheerless, and we found ourselves in a clime where the air was as soft and warm as it was in Illinois in the latter part of May. The green grass was springing from the ground, the "Johnny-jump-ups" were in blossom, the trees were bursting into leaf, and the woods were full of feathered songsters. There was a redbird that would come every morning about sun-up and perch himself in the tall black-oak tree in our company street, and for perhaps an hour he would practice on his impatient, querulous note, that said, as plain as a bird could say, "Boys, boys! get up! get up! get up!" It became a standing remark among the boys that he was a Union redbird and had enlisted in our regiment to sound the reveille.

So the time passed pleasantly away until that eventful Sunday morning, April 6, 1862. According to the Tribune Almanac for that year, the sun rose that morning in Tennessee at 38 minutes past five o'clock. I had no watch, but I have always been of the opinion that the sun was fully an hour and a half high before the fighting began on our part of the line. We had "turned out" about sun-up, answered to roll-call, and had cooked and eaten our breakfast. We had then gone to work, preparing for the regular Sunday morning inspection, which would take place at nine o'clock. The boys were scattered around the company streets and in front of the company parade grounds, engaged in polishing and brightening their muskets, and brushing up and cleaning their shoes, jackets, trousers, and clothing generally. It was a most beautiful morning. The sun was shining brightly

through the trees, and there was not a cloud in the sky. It really seemed like Sunday in the country at home. During week days there was a continual stream of army wagons going to and from the landing, and the clucking of their wheels, the yells and oaths of the drivers, the cracking of whips, mingled with the braying of mules, the neighing of the horses, the commands of the officers engaged in drilling the men, the incessant hum and buzz of the camps, the blare of bugles, and the roll of drums—all these made up a prodigious volume of sound that lasted from the coming-up to the going-down of the sun. But this morning was strangely still. The wagons were silent, the mules were peacefully munching their hay, and the army teamsters were giving us a rest. I listened with delight to the plaintive, mournful tones of a turtle-dove in the woods close by, while on the dead limb of a tall tree right in the camp a woodpecker was sounding his “Long roll” just as I had heard it beaten by his Northern brothers a thousand times on the trees in the Otter Creek bottom at home.

Suddenly, away off on the right, in the direction of Shiloh church, came a dull, heavy “Pum!” then another, and still another. Every man sprung to his feet as if struck by an electric shock, and we looked inquiringly into one another’s faces. “What is that?” asked every one, but no one answered. Those heavy booms then came thicker and faster, and just a few seconds after we heard that first dull, ominous growl, off to the southwest came a low, sullen, continuous roar. There was no mistaking that sound. That was not a squad of pickets emptying their guns on being relieved from duty; it was the continuous roll of thousands of muskets, and told us that a battle was on.

What I have been describing just now occurred during a few seconds only, and with the roar of musketry the long roll began to beat in our camp. Then ensued a scene of desperate haste, the like of which I certainly had never seen before, nor ever saw again. I remember that in the midst of this terrible uproar and confusion, while the boys were

buckling on their cartridge boxes, and before even the companies had been formed, a mounted staff officer came galloping wildly down the line from the right. He checked and whirled his horse sharply around right in our company street, the iron-bound hoofs of his steed crashing among the tin plates lying in a little pile where my mess had eaten its breakfast that morning. The horse was flecked with foam and its eyes and nostrils were red as blood. The officer cast one hurried glance around him, and exclaimed: "My God! this regiment not in line yet! They have been fighting on the right over an hour!" And wheeling his horse, he disappeared in the direction of the colonel's tent.

I know now that history says the battle began about 4:30 that morning; that it was brought on by a reconnoitering party sent out early that morning by General Prentiss; that General Sherman's division on the right was early advised of the approach of the Rebel army, and got ready to meet them in ample time. I have read these things in books and am not disputing them, but am simply telling the story of an enlisted man on the left of Prentiss' line as to what he saw and knew of the condition of thing at about seven o'clock that morning.

Well, the companies were formed, we marched out on the regimental parade ground, and the regiment was formed in line. The command was given: "Load at will; load!" We had anticipated this, however, as the most of us had instinctively loaded our guns before we had formed company. All this time the roar on the right was getting nearer and louder. Our old colonel rode up close to us, opposite the center of the regimental line, and called out, "Attention, battalion!" We fixed our eyes on him to hear what was coming. It turned out to be the old man's battle harangue.

"Gentlemen," said he, in a voice that every man in the regiment heard, "remember your State, and do your duty today like brave men."

That was all. A year later in the war the old man doubtless would have addressed us as "soldiers," and not

as "gentlemen," and he would have omitted his allusion to the "State," which smacked a little of Confederate notions. However, he was a Douglas Democrat, and his mind was probably running on Buena Vista, in the Mexican war, where, it is said, a Western regiment acted badly, and threw a cloud over the reputation for courage of the men of that State which required the thunders of the Civil War to disperse. Immediately after the colonel had given us his brief exhortation, the regiment was marched across the little field I have before mentioned, and we took our place in line of battle, the woods in front of us, and the open field in our rear. We "dressed on" the colors, ordered arms, and stood awaiting the attack. By this time the roar on the right had become terrific. The Rebel army was unfolding its front, and the battle was steadily advancing in our direction. We could begin to see the blue rings of smoke curling upward among the trees off to the right, and the pungent smell of burning gun powder filled the air. As the roar came travelling down the line from the right it reminded me (only it was a million times louder) of the sweep of a thunder-shower in summer-time over the hard ground of a stubble-field.

And there we stood, in the edge of the woods, so still, waiting for the storm to break on us. I know mighty well what I was thinking about then. My mind's eye was fixed on a little log cabin, far away to the north, in the backwoods of western Illinois. I could see my father sitting on the porch, reading the little local newspaper brought from the postoffice the evening before. There was my mother getting my little brothers ready for Sunday school; the old dog lying asleep in the sun; the hens cackling about the barn; all these things and a hundred other tender recollections rushed into my mind. I am not ashamed to say now that I would willingly have given a general quit-claim deed for every jot and tittle of military glory falling to me, past, present, and to come, if I only could have been miraculously and instantaneously set down in the yard of that peaceful little home, a thousand miles away from the haunts of fighting men.

The time we thus stood, waiting the attack, could not have exceeded five minutes. Suddenly, obliquely to our right, there was a long wavy flash of bright light, then another, and another! It was the sunlight shining on gun barrels and bayonets—and—there they were at last! A long brown line, with muskets at a right shoulder shift, in excellent order, right through the woods they came.

We began firing at once. From one end of the regiment to the other leaped a sheet of red flame, and the roar that went up from the edge of that old field doubtless advised General Prentiss of the fact that the Rebels had at last struck the extreme left of his line. We had fired but two or three rounds when, for some reason—I never knew what—we were ordered to fall back across the field, and did so. The whole line, so far as I could see to the right went back. We halted on the other side of the field, in the edge of the woods, in front of our tents, and again began firing. The Rebels, of course, had moved up and occupied the line we had just abandoned. And here we did our first hard fighting during the day. Our officers said, after the battle was over, that we held this line an hour and ten minutes. How long it was I do not know. I "took no note of time."

We retreated from this position as our officers afterward said, because the troops on our right had given away, and we were flanked. Possibly those boys on our right would give the same excuse for their leaving, and probably truly, too. Still, I think we did not fall back a minute too soon. As I rose from the comfortable log from behind which a bunch of us had been firing, I saw men in gray and brown clothes, with trailed muskets, running through the camp on our right, and I saw something else, too, that sent a chill all through me. It was a kind of flag I had never seen before. It was a gaudy sort of thing, with red bars. It flashed over me in a second that that thing was a Rebel flag. It was not more than sixty yards to the right. The smoke around it was low and dense and kept me from seeing the man who was carrying it, but I plainly saw the banner. It was going

fast, with a jerky motion, which told me that the bearer was on a double-quick. About that time we left. We observed no kind of order in leaving; the main thing was to get out of there as quick as we could. I ran down our company street, and in passing the big Sibley tent of our mess I thought of my knapsack with all my traps and belongings, including that precious little packet of letters from home. I said to myself, "I will save my knapsack, anyhow;" but one quick backward glance over my left shoulder made me change my mind, and I went on. I never saw my knapsack or any of its contents afterwards.

Our broken forces halted and re-formed about half a mile to the rear of our camp on the summit of a gentle ridge, covered with thick brush. I recognized our regiment by the little gray pony the old colonel rode, and hurried to my place in the ranks. Standing there with our faces once more to the front, I saw a seemingly endless column of men in blue, marching by the flank, who were filing off to the right through the woods, and I heard our old German adjutant, Cramer, say to the colonel, "Dose are de troops of Sheneral Hurlbut. He is forming a new line dere in be bush." I exclaimed to myself from the bottom of my heart, "Bully for General Hurlbut and the new line in the bush! Maybe we'll whip 'em yet." I shall never forget my feelings about this time. I was astonished at our first retreat in the morning across the field back to our camp, but it occurred to me that maybe that was only "strategy" and all done on purpose; but when we had to give up our camp, and actually turn our backs and run half a mile, it seemed to me that we were forever disgraced, and I kept thinking to myself: "What will they say about this at home?"

I was very dry for a drink, and as we were doing nothing just then, I slipped out of ranks and ran down to the little hollow in our rear, in search of water. Finding a little pool, I threw myself on the ground and took a copious draught. As I rose to my feet, I observed an officer about a rod above me also quenching his thirst, holding his horse meanwhile

by the bridle. As he rose I saw it was our old adjutant. At no other time would I have dared accost him unless in the line of duty, but the situation made me bold. "Adjutant," I said, "What does this mean—our having to run this way? Ain't we whipped?" He blew the water from his mustache, and quickly answered in a careless way: "Oh, no; dat is all ride. Wé yoost fall back to form on the reserve. Sheneral Buell vas now crossing der river mit 50,000 men, and vill be here pooty quick; and Sheneral Lew Wallace is coming from Crump's Landing mit 15,000 more. Ve vips 'em; ve vips 'em. Go to your gompany." Back I went on the run, with a heart as light as a feather. As I took my place in the ranks beside my chum, Jack Medford, I said to him: "Jack, I've just had a talk with the old adjutant, down at the branch where I've been to get a drink. He says Buell is crossing the river with 75,000 men and a whole world of cannon, and that some other general is coming up from Crump's Landing with 25,000 more men. He says we fell back here on purpose, and that we're going to whip the Secesh, just sure. Ain't that just perfectly bully?" I had improved some on the adjutant's figures, as the news was so glorious I thought a little variance of 25,000 or 30,000 men would make no difference in the end. But as the long hours wore on that day, and still Buell and Wallace did not come, my faith in the adjutant's veracity became considerably shaken.

It was at this point that my regiment was detached from Prentiss' division and served with it no more that day. We were sent some distance to the right to support a battery, the name of which I never learned.* It was occupying the summit of a slope, and was actively engaged when we reached it. We were put in position about twenty rods in the rear of the battery, and ordered to lie flat on the ground. The ground sloped gently down in our direction, so that by hugging it close, the rebel shot and shell went over us.

It was here, at about ten o'clock in the morning, that I

NOTE.—Some years after this sketch was written I ascertained that this battery was Richardson's, Co. D, 1st Missouri Light Artillery.

first saw Grant that day. He was on horseback, of course, accompanied by his staff, and was evidently making a personal examination of his lines. He went by us in a gallop, riding between us and the battery, at the head of his staff. The battery was then hotly engaged; shot and shell were whizzing overhead, and cutting off the limbs of trees, but Grant rode through the storm with perfect indifference, seemingly paying no more attention to the missiles than if they had been paper wads.

We remained in support of this battery until about 2 o'clock in the afternoon. We were then put in motion by the right flank, filed to the left, crossed the left-hand Corinth road; then we were thrown into the line by the command: "By the left flank, march." We crossed a little ravine and up a slope, and relieved a regiment on the left of Hurlbut's line. This line was desperately engaged, and had been at this point, as we afterward's learned, for fully four hours. I remember as we went up the slope and began firing, about the first thing that met my gaze was what out West we would call a "windrow" of dead men in blue; some doubled up face downward, others with their white faces upturned to the sky, brave boys who had been shot to death in "holding the line." Here we stayed until our last cartridge was shot away. We were then relieved by another regiment. We filled our cartridge boxes again and went back to the support of our battery. The boys laid down and talked in low tones. Many of our comrades alive and well an hour ago, we had left dead on that bloody ridge. And still the battle raged. From right to left, everywhere, it was one never-ending, terrible roar, with no prospect of stopping.

Somewhere between 4 and 5 o'clock, as near as I can tell, everything became ominously quiet. Our battery ceased firing; the gunners leaned against the pieces and talked and laughed. Suddenly a staff officer rode up and said something in a low tone to the commander of the battery, then rode to our colonel and said something to him. The battery horses were at once brought up from a ravine in the rear,

and the battery limbered up and moved off through the woods diagonally to the left and rear. We were put in motion by the flank and followed it. Everything kept so still, the loudest noise I heard was the clucking of the wheels of the gun-carriages and caissons as they wound through the woods. We emerged from the woods and entered a little old field. I then saw to our right and front lines of men in blue moving in the same direction we were, and it was evident that we were falling back. All at once, on the right, the left, and from our recent front, came one tremendous roar, and the bullets fell like hail. The lines took the double-quick towards the rear. For awhile the attempt was made to fall back in order, and then everything went to pieces. My heart failed me utterly. I thought the day was lost. A confused mass of men and guns, caissons, army wagons, ambulances, and all the debris of a beaten army surged and crowded along the narrow dirt road to the landing, while that pitiless storm of leaden hail came crashing on us from the rear. It was undoubtedly at this crisis in our affairs that the division of General Prentiss was captured.

I will digress here for a minute to speak of a little incident connected with this disastrous feature of the day that has always impressed me as a pathetic instance of the patriotism and unselfish devotion to the cause that was by no means uncommon among the rank and file of the Union armies.

There was in my company a middle-aged German named Charles Oberdieck. According to the company descriptive book, he was a native of the then kingdom of Hanover, now a province of Prussia. He was a typical German, flaxen-haired, blue-eyed, quiet and taciturn, of limited and meager education, but a model soldier, who accepted without question and obeyed without a murmur the orders of his military superiors. Prior to the war he had made his living by chopping cord-wood in the high, timbered hills near the mouth of the Illinois river, or by working as a common laborer in the country on the farms at \$14.00 a month. He was un-

married, his parents were dead, and he had no other immediate relatives surviving, either in his fatherland or in the country of his adoption. He and I enlisted from the same neighborhood. I had known him in civil life at home, and hence he was disposed to be more communicative with me than with the other boys of the company. A day or two after the battle he and I were sitting in the shade of a tree, in camp, talking over the incidents of the fight. "Charley," I said to him, "How did you feel along about four o'clock Sunday afternoon when they broke our lines, we were falling back in disorder, and it looked like the whole business was gone up generally?" He knocked the ashes from his pipe and, turning his face quickly towards me, said: "I yoost tells you how I feels. I no care any dings about Charley; he haf no wife nor children, fadder nor mudder, brudder nor sister; if Charley get killed, it makes no difference; dere vas nobody to cry for him, so I dinks nudding about myselfs; but I tells you, I yoost den feels bad for de Cause!"

Noble, simple-hearted old Charley! It was the imminent danger only to the Cause that made his heart sink in that seemingly fatal hour. When we heard in the malignant and triumphant roar of the Rebel cannon in our rear what might be the death-knell of the last great experiment of civilized men to establish among the nations of the world a united republic, freed from the curse of pampered kings and selfish, grasping aristocrats—it was in that moment, in his simple language, that the peril to the Cause was the supreme and only consideration.

It must have been when we were less than half a mile from the landing on our disorderly retreat before mentioned, that we saw standing in the line of battle, at ordered arms, extending from both sides of the road until lost to sight in the woods, a long, well-ordered line of men in blue. What did that mean, and where had they come from? I was walking by the side of Enoch Wallace, the orderly sergeant of my company. He was a man of nerve and courage, and by word and deed had done more that day to hold us green and

untried boys in ranks and firmly to our duty than any other man in the company. But even he, in the face of this seemingly appalling state of things, had evidently lost heart. I said to him: "Enoch, what are those men there for?" He answered in a low tone: "I guess they are put there to hold the Rebels in check till the army can get across the river." And doubtless that was the thought of every intelligent soldier in our beaten column. And yet it goes to show how little the common soldier knew of the actual situation. We did not know then that this line was the last line of battle of the "Fighting Fourth Division" under General Hurlbut; that on its right was the division of McCleernand, the Fort Donelson boys; that on its right, at right angles to it, and, as it were, the refused wing of the army, was glorious old Sherman, hanging on with bulldog grip to the road across Snake Creek from Crump's Landing by which Lew Wallace was coming with 5,000 men. In other words, we still had an unbroken line confronting the enemy, made up of men who were not yet ready, by any manner of means, to give up that they were whipped. Nor did we know then that our retreating mass consisted only of some regiments of Hurlbut's division, and some other isolated commands, who had not been duly notified of the recession of Hurlbut and of his falling back to form a new line, and thereby came very near sharing the fate of Prentiss' men and being marched to the rear as prisoners of war. Speaking for myself, it was twenty years after the battle before I found these things out, yet they are true, just as much so as the fact that the sun rose yesterday morning. Well, we filed through Hurlbut's line, halted, re-formed, and faced to the front once more. We were put in place a short distance in the rear of Hurlbut, as a support to some heavy guns. It must have been about five o'clock now. Suddenly, on the extreme left, and just a little above the landing, came a deafening explosion that fairly shook the ground beneath our feet, followed by others in quick and regular succession. The look of wonder and inquiry that the soldiers' faces wore for a moment disappeared for

one of joy and exultation as it flashed across our minds that the gunboats had at last joined hands in the dance, and were pitching big twenty-pound Parrot shells up the ravine in front of Hurlbut, to the terror and discomfiture of our adversaries.

The last place my regiment assumed was close to the road coming up from the landing. As we were lying there I heard the strains of martial music and saw a body of men marching by the flank up the road. I slipped out of ranks and walked out to the side of the road to see what troops they were. Their band was playing "Dixie's Land," and playing it well. The men were marching at a quick step, carrying their guns, cartridge-boxes, haversacks, canteens, and blanket-rolls. I saw that they had not been in the fight, for there was no powder-smoke on their faces. "What regiment is this?" I asked of a young sergeant marching on the flank. Back came the answer in a quick, cheery tone, "The 36th Indiana, the advance guard of Buell's army."

I did not, on hearing this, throw my cap into the air and yell. That would have given those Indiana fellows a chance to chaff and guy me, and possibly make sarcastic remarks, which I did not care to provoke. I gave one big, gasping swallow and stood still, but the blood thumped in the veins of my throat and my heart fairly pounded against my little infantry jacket in the joyous rapture of this glorious intelligence. Soldiers need not be told of the thrill of unspeakable exultation they all have felt at the sight of armed friends in danger's darkest hour. Speaking for myself alone, I can only say, in the most heart-felt sincerity, that in all my obscure military career, never to me was the sight of re-inforcing legions so precious and so welcome as on that Sunday evening when the rays of the descending sun were flashed back from the bayonets of Buell's advance column as it deployed on the bluffs of Pittsburg Landing.

My account of the battle is about done. So far as I saw or heard, very little fighting was done that evening after Buell's advance crossed the river. The sun must have been fully an hour high when anything like regular and continuous

firing had entirely ceased. What the result would have been if Beauregard had massed his troops on our left and forced the fighting late Sunday evening would be a matter of opinion, and a common soldier's opinion would not be considered worth much.

My regiment was held in reserve the next day, and was not engaged. I have, therefore, no personal experience of that day to relate. After the battle of Shiloh, it fell to my lot to play my humble part in several other fierce conflicts of arms, but Shiloh was my maiden fight. It was there I first saw a gun fired in anger, heard the whistle of a bullet, or saw a man die a violent death, and my experiences, thoughts, impressions, and sensations on that bloody Sunday will abide with me as long as I live.